

President's Memorandum to Faculty and Staff

Office of the President
April 1, 2004
Ext. 2500

It seems difficult to believe that it is already April. The arrival of the first spring flowers and the greening of our lawns is a sure sign that it will not be long before the end of the semester and commencement are upon us. I want to take this opportunity to update you on our planning and legislative efforts and to invite you to a special presentation I will make later this month.

Planning

In January each college and division presented their unit action plans and an assessment of their efforts toward university strategic directions. Next these were summarized by vice presidents and vice chancellors. Finally they have been combined into a single action plan with university and divisional goals. This is accessible at

<http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/administration/president/uaps2004.htm> .

I would very much appreciate receiving your comment and feedback on these goals and this year's planning process. My intent was to build upon past unit action planning efforts which were very useful in involving much of the campus. However I wanted to see if we could do this with less paperwork and presentation. Additionally I hoped to encourage the idea of continuing projects and to include an assessment component in our planning process. Please accept my thanks for your participation in this planning effort.

Legislative Update

At the time of this writing it appears that Governor Granholm's approach to higher education funding is holding. You may recall this required we not raise tuition mid-year and not raise tuition for next year by more than the cost of inflation, either 2.3 or 2.4%. In exchange we were promised a return of three percentage points from the five percent base budget reduction in December's executive order. Included with this was a promise to not reduce university budgets for 2004-2005 either now or through an executive order later in the year.

Each year the senate and house budget committees hear from each of the state universities. This year the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee for Higher Education took the lead. I appeared before this committee, chaired by Senator Mike Goschka, on March 5th at Cornerstone University in Grand Rapids. My comments were directed at the difference Ferris State University can make for the state at this particular economic time. I believe they were well received by the committee and by local members of the House that were also in attendance. For some time it has been my approach to build a webpage for presentations I make. The comments and supporting materials for this presentation are available at <http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/administration/president/senate030504.htm> . I would appreciate hearing your thoughts and reactions to them.

We will next present to the House Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee on April 28th. While there is not new money available and there appears little chance of a capital facilities bill, I am pleased with current plans to restore some funding to our budget and to not cut higher education further. Given the shortfall for next year's state budget, this is significant recognition of the importance currently being given to higher education in Lansing.

Preparing for Our Future

This year I embarked on a process to listen and learn from you about Ferris. To date I have conducted sixty-three meetings with faculty, staff, and students. The intent has been to hear your thoughts about the strengths, challenges, and future for our University. This has been a wonderful learning experience which I have truly enjoyed. I am very appreciative of the time you took to visit with me.

Before the academic year concludes I want to share with you some of what I have learned and to offer some thoughts on our future. I will be presenting these observations and ideas on Thursday, April 15th at 2:00 pm in the Rankin Center Dome Room. April is an especially busy time, so I will also share these remarks in a campus message for those who are unable to attend.

Concluding Thoughts

As I learn more and more about Ferris I continue to be impressed by our people and programs. This is truly an extraordinary place with a wonderful future.

As the pace picks up for the end of the semester, I want you to know how much I appreciate you and the difference you make for our campus. I am hopeful you can join me on April 15th.

Best wishes,

David L. Eisler, President